

## SEVIER COUNTY (UTAH). COUNTY COMMISSION <sup>[879]</sup>

### MINUTES, 1865#[ongoing]

**DESCRIPTION:** These minute books record the actions of the county commission, the governing body of the county. The commission (known during the territorial period as the county court) was authorized to manage all county business and property. This includes budgeting and auditing; use of county lands; districting for schools, roads, voting, drainage, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex-officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; and incorporating municipalities.

Following the formation of territorial government, the legislature in 1852 passed acts relating to the formation and government of counties. There were no county commissions, but the probate judge in conjunction with the county selectmen were invested "with the usual powers and jurisdiction of County Commissioners" and as such were known as the county court. The probate court clerk (also known as the county clerk) was to keep the records of the court. Sevier County followed this pattern of government when created in 1865. The court suspended business in 1867 because of Indian hostilities, requiring the probate judge to re-organize the county (re-appointing selectmen, redrawing precincts and school districts, etc.) in 1871 when business resumed. With statehood in 1896 an actual board of county commissioners was created. The probate judge was removed, but the selectmen continued serving as commissioners until elections were held. The county clerk remained the clerk of the board, recording the minutes. Minute entries are prefaced by date, names of those present, and where and when the board met.

The commission was authorized to manage all county business and county property. This included auditing all claims against the county and payments by the treasurer. Until the early

20th century, individual claims were regularly itemized in the minutes. Annual budgets, salaries, and departmental budgets and fiscal reports are recorded throughout. The commission levied property taxes for county purposes and by the 1880s served as a board of equalization. Adjustments on individual property tax assessments are itemized.

The county court controlled all timber and water privileges and could grant mill sites and herd grounds. Irrigation districts were created beginning in 1871 and the first drainage districts were set up from about 1915 to 1920. The court and later the commission created road districts and oversaw the layout of roads, a task noted regularly throughout the minutes. They located sites and oversaw the erection of public buildings such as a courthouse and jail.

Commissioners cared for the indigent and oversaw public health and safety. Quarantine regulations were established and physicians and health boards appointed. Use of the pauper fund increases by the 1930s. Such proceedings frequently include a brief discussion of the family's personal and financial circumstances as well as the county's determination of what relief to allow. Tax relief is common during the period with details concerning compromise settlements on delinquent taxes and tax sales entered in the minutes. Entries note the tax amount and often the description of the personal property or location of the real property involved.

Commissioners served as canvassers of elections, also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting precincts, and assigning polling places. The county provided for elections to incorporate towns and to bond. The county was authorized to license liquor vendors and butcher shops. Business licenses in general were granted by the court beginning in the 1880s. The granting of franchises for such things as telephones and electricity are noted beginning in the late 1890s.

**ARRANGEMENT:** The series is arranged chronologically by date of meeting. Volumes are labeled alphabetically, starting over in 1901.

**RESEARCH NOTE:** Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects; on private businesses operating within the unincorporated county limits; and on private individuals or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable property within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of Sevier county (up to and including the incorporation or disincorporation of municipalities) was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

**RELATED RECORDS:** Series 85242 contains ORDINANCES enacted by the commission and discussed in these minutes. Also, while the minute books summarize the meetings of the

commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Sevier county agencies should be consulted.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** The Sevier County Clerk as secretary for the Sevier County Commission may have current holdings. Original paper copy may be held in the office. Reel 1 was filmed in 1966 by the LDS Genealogical Society; information on reels 2 and 3 is not available. The series was processed by A.C. Cone in July 1996.

### **CONTAINER LIST**

<b>Reel</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Volume</b>
1	1865, Mar	A
	6#1877, Mar 5	
1	1877, Jun	B
	4#1887, Sep 6	
1	1887, Dec	C
	5#1894, Aug 20	
1	1894, Sep	D
	3#1901, Jan 3	
2	1901, Jan	A
	7#1911, Dec 31	
3	1911, Dec	A
	31#1912, Dec 30	
3	1913, Jan	B
	6#1932, Nov 7	
3	1932, Nov	C
	8#1941, Dec 30	
3	1942, Jan	D
	5#1948, Jul 3	